

VT Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets

- Increase Access to Fresh & Healthy Local Food
- Only 5% of the food we consume is produced in VT
- How to begin reversing this trend?
- Identifying critical components for agriculture to continue within your local community and regional area.
- LAND....without it agriculture cannot exist.

Increase Access to Fresh and Healthy Local Food

“I hate the implication that agricultural land is simply ‘*land in waiting*’ for development as housing, commercial or industrial uses. Agriculture is a land use. Too often, agricultural land gets a second-class status that isn’t appropriate.”

Planning for Agriculture

- **Planning for agriculture and availability of healthy locally produced food.**
- **Municipal Planning Process:**
 - ▣ Encourage communities to complete community food assessments, and to utilize the results of those assessments in their planning and decision-making.
 - ▣ Protect and encourage the maintenance of agricultural lands for the production of food and other agricultural products.

Planning for Agriculture

- Develop a town plan to ensure that agriculture remains a dominant, viable land use.
- Ensure that new developments are located and designed to conserve the agricultural potential of important farmland.
- Identify strategies to protect long-term viability of agricultural & forest land within the community.
- Support farmland conservation easements.
- Municipal, regional, and state agency plans should all be compatible.



FARM TO SCHOOL IN VERMONT

Nourishing Students & Communities



Farmer & Representative Will Stevens

“The long term implications of engaging our youth in positive relationships with healthy, local food and the folks that produce it are enormous,”

Vermont Farm to School Grants



❑ Impact Since 2006

- ✓ 13,730 Students Served
- ✓ 35 Schools in 13 Counties
- ✓ 3,000 Trained in Farm to School
- ✓ 120 Farmers Involved

❑ Annual Averages

- ✓ 11 Schools Planning & Implementation
- ✓ 800+ Students Visit Farms
- ✓ 500+ Community Members Involved

State, Regional & National Impact

❑ Vermont

Farm to School has reached nearly half of our schools

Regional Programs are now organizing and coordinating Farm to School efforts in their areas

❑ Regional

VT FEED staff serves as Northeast Regional coordinator to National Farm to School Network

VAAFM staff serves as Vermont representative to National Farm to School Network

❑ National

**Vermont leads the nation in youth consumption of fruits and vegetables.
Farm to School is acknowledged as a strategy for obesity prevention.**

Farm to Institution

- 2010 VT Legislature appropriated \$100,000 of ARRA funding (\$75,000 for grants and \$25,000 for regional marketing study of ground beef).
- 2011 VT Legislature supported the creation of a Local Foods Coordinator at the VT Agency of Agriculture to work with Farmers' Market Association, Farm to School, Farm to Institution, and Community Supported Agriculture models.

Farm to Institution

- Fletcher Allen Hospital sources 35% of their food purchases from local and regional producers.
- Barriers that need addressing:
 1. Distribution
 2. Aggregation
 3. Production

Farmers' Markets

- Approximately 90 active markets throughout VT
- Increased access to locally produced food.
- Direct sale to consumer – highest return to producer.
- Challenges:
 - ▣ Lack of zoning for markets
 - ▣ Signage for event
 - ▣ Need to incorporate into town plan.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

- Approximately 180+ CSAs are actively partnering with consumers for weekly delivery of fresh, locally produced, and grown food.
- Strengthens food access for all
- Best value for both consumer and producer.

Wrap Up

- Per capita, Vermont leads the nation in:
 - ▣ Most Farmers' Markets
 - ▣ Most Community Supported Agriculture
 - ▣ Five times higher than the national average for direct sales from producer to consumer.
- ▣ Farm-to-Plate initiative has set a goal of increasing our consumption of locally produced food from 5% to 10% within the next ten years.
- ▣ **Incorporating access to healthy food and the opportunity for agribusinesses to meet that need must be addressed within our municipal and regional plans.**

Sylvia Jensen

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets

